

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

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Dear Mike, Steve and Conference Participants,

I want to thank you for holding this first-of-its-kind conference on the unique challenges and opportunities posed by the integration of distributed generation within our changing energy grid. I'm sorry that due to scheduling conflicts I am unable to join you this evening. However, I am pleased that you have brought together a stellar mix of experts from the utility, information technology and research and development sectors to begin tackling the weighty, yet ultimately tractable, problems associated with creating the "smart grid" of the future. I truly believe that the combined efforts of the public and private sectors will remove barriers to the widespread deployment of technologies that promise to make our grid more reliable and efficient, with more diverse and economical generating resources located closer to the loads they serve.

I know much of this technically challenging work has already begun, and I am proud that much of it is taking place right here in the Pacific Northwest. I believe our region is poised to continue in its historical role as a laboratory for energy innovations—and this is especially the case when it comes to the incorporation of distributed generation and communication technologies, many of which were first developed here in the Northwest. With the participation and support of federal entities such as the Pacific Northwest National Lab, Department of Energy and Bonneville Power Administration, combined with private sector expertise in software and technology, I believe we have the ingredients to start a revolution in energy technology.

Rest assured, whether it is support for deployment of broadband--so necessary in connecting end-use customers with the real-time information that will enable smart energy consumption and the creation of "virtual" power resources—or the retooling of federal policies to keep pace with technological advances in the energy sector, I stand ready to assist in this endeavor. While we have taken up some of these issues in the energy bill that remains subject to deliberations of a congressional conference committee, there is surely far more progress to be made. As a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I look forward to working with you to make certain the vision of a more reliable, economical and efficient energy grid is realized in a manner that meets the needs of our emerging 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

Again, thank you for the invitation to participate in this conference.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator

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